



# AOC Newsletter



Volume 4, Issue 12

December 2009

## ADOC/AOC Complete First Video Conferencing Pilot

By Brian Corbett, Alabama Department of Corrections



ATMORE - Video conferencing in a prison setting has its advantages and is becoming increasingly popular. The Alabama Department of Correction (ADOC), in conjunction with the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) and the Circuit Court of Escambia County, has launched a video pilot at Holman Correctional Facility.

Processing and transporting inmates to and from court is costly, with inherent risk to public safety and security personnel. Video conferencing, that includes full motion video and audio via closed circuit cameras, connects the courthouse with the prison and eliminates much of the dilemma.

In early November, Circuit Judge Bert Rice heard four cases via video conference with inmates incarcerated at Holman Correctional Facility. "I like the idea of being able to look at someone and see them, and for them to see the judge. From an administration of justice standpoint, it's a better situation to include them more fully in the process."

Video conferencing has been used in various federal and state courts for more than a decade. The process, when fully implemented, could save the State of Alabama thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of dollars. "Chief Justice (Sue Bell) Cobb immediately saw the utility of being able to complete this process," said Marty Ramsay, Deputy Director of the Administrative Office of Courts. "We feel we need to embrace this technology on a statewide scale."

It is not uncommon for judges to hold thousands of post conviction hearings on an annual basis, most filed by inmates behind bars. Such actions may raise claims of innocence or newly discovered evidence. In 2008, 1,383 such motions were filed with state trial and appellate courts. In Atmore alone, more than 2,200 inmates are housed at Holman and Fountain Correctional Facilities - enough to keep Judge Rice and the Escambia County courts busy.

"We learn as we go, but the technology has certainly arrived and we need to use and expand it," said Rice. "This is a good circuit to be the pilot with two large prisons and a large volume of inmate cases. We can better serve justice with these proceedings."

Video court hearings will be conducted in a manner that honors the due process rights of all defendants by providing a clear, accurate visual and audio representation of all parties involved in the proceedings. The link was established through AOC video gateway directly from the facility to the court. It makes use of the existing IP network so there's no additional connection cost to the DOC.

"Elmore County is perhaps next," said Ramsay. "Eventually, we'd like to set up as many as eighteen video conferencing systems across the state. Elmore County is a target based on the number of prisons in that county."

Expanding the technology statewide - allowing for the potential of accommodating a variety of courtroom proceedings - comes with an estimated price tag of more than \$150,000. Video conferencing will potentially save millions over time but with budget reductions at the AOC and the ADOC funds are not available to complete the expansion. Ultimately, the use of new technology will help to conserve valuable corrections, court and law enforcement resources.



An inmate at Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore, Alabama, participates in a video conferencing hearing with Escambia County Circuit Judge Bert Rice

## The Benefits of Video Arraignments

By Robert Rygiel, Court Services and IT



One aspect inherent in judicial video conferencing is that of video arraignments, something that has been in existence since the early 1980s in the United States. The Washoe County Sheriff's Office located in Reno, Nevada, created a video arraignment model in 1988. Its annual estimated operating cost is only **\$40,000** per year, while the utilization of video arraignments saves the county roughly **\$695,000** annually. The astonishing savings are not unique to Washoe County, but rather, indicative of all jurisdictions, sheriffs' offices, and detention facilities employing the equipment.

In the past few years, many states, including California, have come to rely on the technology. The dangers associated with transporting inmates have diminished, and the draining of resources that correlate with transportation have been nearly eradicated for those states using video arraignments.

While the initial startup cost for a video arraignment system can be pricey, monetary and personnel conservation comes very quickly. Essentially, the prompt returns provided by video arraignments make up for the startup cost.

Video arraignment savings do not stop at personnel costs, but rather, also reduce costs for a state's citizens. Hon. Kim Dunning, Assistant Presiding Circuit Judge, Orange County Superior Court, California, writes that by using video arraignments, "court calendars will operate more efficiently and at less cost to taxpayers." Judicial expediency and organization are vital for a courtroom's success, and savings to taxpayers allow the state treasury to support other necessary or underfunded programs.

Since the introduction of video arraignments, consistent technological improvements and advancements have made glitches and other complexities vanish. As mentioned earlier, there are maintenance fees associated with video arraignments, but such fees are marginal when compared to expensive inconveniences created by an inmate's physical appearance at an arraignment.

As the system becomes more widespread, video arraignments have become a necessity to the judiciary. Our society is one set in a technologically reliant environment, an environment that has provided innumerable benefits to us. With this in mind, the judicial system must evolve with technology so that it, too, may function smoothly and economically in our contemporary world, exploiting the luxury technology provides us.

## Travel Mileage Rate Decreases



According to the State of Alabama's Department of Finance, the Travel Mileage Rate will Decrease to **50 cents per mile** in January 2010

Effective January 1, 2010, the mileage rate paid to persons traveling in privately owned vehicles on official business for the State of Alabama will decrease to 50 cents per mile. The mileage rate, which is paid in lieu of actual expenses for transportation, is in accordance with **Code of Alabama 1975, §36-7-22**, as amended, which became effective October 1, 1999. This code section sets the mileage rate at the amount allowed by the Internal Revenue Code for income tax deductions. Therefore, mileage reimbursement for travel on or after January 1, 2010 will be calculated at the new rate of **50 cents per mile**.

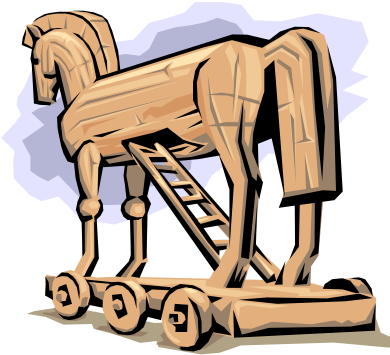
When calculating the amount to be reimbursed, all mileage listed on an expense account must be totaled and then multiplied by **50 cents** (Example: **111 miles** X **.50** = **\$55.50**).

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Kathleen Baxter at (334)242-4857 or Tucker Wilson at (334)242-7057.



# Viruses, Trojans & Worms

By Robert Barclay, Security Analyst



**M**alware, short for malicious logic, is a general term used to encompass viruses, Trojans, and worms. Malware can be defined as any program that is created or designed in which a user did not intend to be placed on the system. Not all malware is created to be harmful.

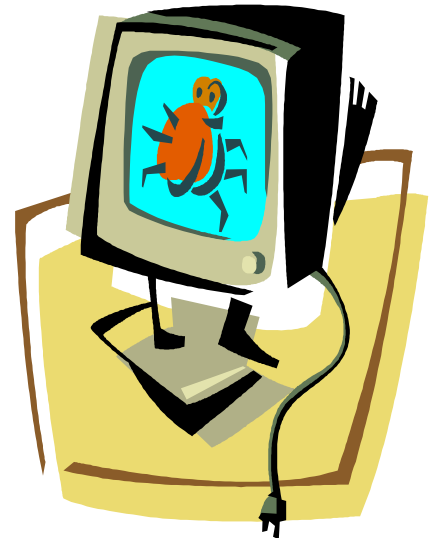
**J**ust like a biological virus that infects human cells, computer viruses do the same to computer “code”. Viruses can not spread or duplicate themselves and require a carrier or a host. Most viruses are designed to infect executable programs **.exe** or **.com** files. They are primarily spread when people share files through email, disks, or thumb drives.

**T**rojans are named after the “Trojan Horse of Troy”. Just like the famous horse, Trojans mask themselves as a legitimate application and once activated do their thing. It is estimated that **25%** of the malware on the Internet are a form of Trojan. Like viruses, Trojans need a carrier or host to spread. Many websites have Trojans built into the html code, thus infecting computers when visited. Never install programs unless it is from a trusted source. The most popular sites for Trojans are gaming sites and freeware download sites.

**O**f the three, worms are the most dangerous. Unlike viruses and Trojans, worms have the ability to replicate and transport themselves across a network, and can do it very quickly. Not only do worms damage files and data, but they slow down system resources and take up bandwidth thus causing a denial of service. Some worms have been known to infect up to **50** million computers world-wide.

**S**o how do you protect yourself against infection?

1. **H**ave an **update-to-date** antivirus software on your PC. Definitions are released almost daily. If your definition file is more than **three** days old, it is out of date.
2. **D**o not click on untrusted web sites. This is easier said than done. Many sites (including trusted sites) contain **IFrames**. IFrames allow a site to place additional coding into web page from an outside source. Many sites use IFrames to lease space to advertisers, partners, etc. Since IFrames are a separate space that allows for data to be passed, it is very easy for a hacker to inject malware code into the program running within the IFrame. Many times it is very difficult for users to distinguish between what content is valid vs. an IFrame injection.
3. **S**can all CDs, thumb drives, etc when placing them into a PC **prior** to opening any files. There have been instances where hackers have left CDs and thumb drives laying around for someone to pick them up and install them into a computer. This is a popular way to install **key-loggers** and other data stealing programs.
4. **D**on't just click “**Yes**” or “**Continue**”. Read the pop-ups on your PC, particularly when browsing the web. These pop-ups are usually asking do you really want to install, run, or change a program. When a user clicks “**Yes**”, the system then assumes that the user trusts the program in question and runs it. If you are unsure, please contact the **Helpdesk** and they will be happy to assist.

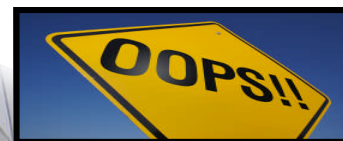


**I**f you suspect that your computer may be infected with a virus, Trojan or worm, please contact the **PCHelpDesk** immediately. [PCHelp@alacourt.gov](mailto:PCHelp@alacourt.gov) or call 1-866-954-9411 If AlacourtPLUS is not available to a user Option 1, Option 1.

## Employee Recognition Program Employee Years of State Service for November 2009

We would like to recognize the following **Employees** who have reached a milestone in their career with the **State of Alabama** by attaining the mentioned years of state service (in **5** year increments only).

Please direct any questions regarding State Years of Service to Lisa Gilliland at (334) 954-5103 or email her at [Lisa.Gilliland@alacourt.gov](mailto:Lisa.Gilliland@alacourt.gov).



Jeb Fannin's Years of Service was incorrectly listed in last month's newsletter. We are sorry for any inconvenience.

Name	Years	County	Name	Years	County
DIANNE MOONEY	35	Madison	TAYLOR K. CLAYTON	10	Tallapoosa
LISA D. HALL	35	DeKalb	LIBBY K. SMITH	10	Tallapoosa
HON. RANDALL L. COLE	35	DeKalb	TRACY D. JOLLY	10	Tuscaloosa
CYNTHIA L. AVERY	35	Jefferson (Bessemer)	ROBIN H. FLOYD	5	Etowah
SUSAN W. RICHARDSON	30	Cullman	HON. ROBERT E. ARMSTRONG, III	5	Dallas
HON. LARRY F. WARREN	30	Calhoun	LARRY E. ISRAEL	5	Criminal Appeals
VIRGINIA M. DANIEL	25	Jefferson	KATHERINE M. HOLDER	5	Lauderdale
JEAN W. BURT	25	Monroe	CHARLIE JOHNSON	5	Jefferson
JANA B. HARBIN	25	Madison	KAREE O. MOODY	5	Mobile
DONNA D. PALMER	25	Morgan	SARAH S. SIMS	5	Autauga
DONNA M. JOHNSON	25	Marshall	MANDI E. HALL	5	Autauga
JENNIFER MCMILLIAN	20	Mobile			
SHERRIE L. YOUNG	20	Marion			
HON. LAURA B. PHILLIPS	20	Calhoun			

**Just One Look**  
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### ON DEMAND Access to Alabama's Trial Court Records... One Case at a Time

Type of Searches	Alabama Court Records Available		Report Information	
Name	Criminal Records	State Traffic Records	Setting Dates	Summary
Case Number	Civil Records	Domestic Relations	Court Action	Financial Info
	Small Claims Records	Child Support	Party Information	Images

### "Just One Look"

**Case Detail Report** includes basic court information, court action, case status, setting dates, party information, financial history and a detailed case action summary.

**Case Monitoring** allows a subscriber to monitor future changes in a case record. The subscriber receives an email notification anytime a change is entered into the state system. The notification email shows the old information, along with the change.

The general public, most of whom will not subscribe to Alacourt.com, are able to electronically access State Court documents through this On DEMAND website.

A flat fee is charged per case instead of the monthly fee that Alacourt.com subscribers pay for access to court documents.

The Just One Look link can be accessed from the AOC website or [www.AlacourtAccess.com](http://www.AlacourtAccess.com).

If you would like a link to "Just One Look" placed on your State Court website, please contact IT Support at 1-866-954-9411 Option 1, Option 4 or email [ApplicationSupport@alacourt.gov](mailto:ApplicationSupport@alacourt.gov)